

FACT SHEET

For Child Care Centers

CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS (Crypto)

Purpose: Information for child care settings when Crypto is present in their facility.

What is Crypto?

Crypto, or Cryptosporidiosis, is an illness that is caused by a parasite. It affects both animals and humans. People can get Crypto by coming in contact with other people or animals that have the parasite, swimming or playing in water with the parasite in it, or by drinking contaminated water.

Who can get Crypto?

Anyone. Child care workers and diaper-aged children who attend child care centers are at increased risk for getting Crypto.

How is Crypto spread?

Crypto is found in the feces (stool) of an infected person or animal. It is spread:

- By putting something in your mouth or accidentally swallowing something that has come in contact with the stool of a person or animal infected with Crypto. This could be items such as toys, hands, eating utensils, etc. Items can be contaminated by a person who has not properly washed their hands after a diaper change or toileting.
- By accidentally swallowing Crypto picked up from surfaces (such as toys, bathroom fixtures, changing tables, diaper pails) contaminated with stool from an infected person.
- By swallowing recreational water contaminated with Crypto. Recreational water is water in swimming or wading pools, hot tubs, lakes, rivers, ponds, or streams that can be contaminated with sewage or feces from humans or animals. Note: Crypto is chlorine resistant and can live for days in pools.
- By eating uncooked food contaminated with Crypto. Thoroughly wash with uncontaminated water all vegetables and fruits you plan to eat or serve raw.

What are the symptoms of Crypto?

The most common symptom of Crypto is frequent and watery diarrhea. Other symptoms may include headache, nausea, vomiting and low-grade fever. Symptoms may briefly improve and then get worse again, but people who are healthy usually get well in 14-30 days. However, some people may not show symptoms of illness, but can still spread the disease to others.

How can child care facilities prevent the spread of Crypto?

- Frequent hand washing by both staff and children. Wash hands with hot, soapy water before handling foods and eating, and after using the toilet, diapering young children, and handling animals
- Separate diapering and food-handling areas and staff responsibilities
- Disinfect diapering areas and toys*
- Use disposable gloves with every diaper change and change the paper with every diaper change
- Use disposable paper to cover diaper-changing areas
- Separate diaper-changing areas from children's play areas
- Educate parents and staff about the illness and outbreak
- Employees with diarrhea should not prepare food for anyone
- Suspend the use of child wading pools, water tables, and other water-based activities
- Children may come back to child care once they do not have diarrhea

***Disinfection of diaper changing areas and toys**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following procedure for child care centers with staff or children who have Crypto:

To reduce the level of Crypto, clean and disinfect tabletops and highchairs after each use by a child. Use a 3% hydrogen peroxide solution or if available, a 6% concentration of hydrogen peroxide, and let it sit on the surface for 20 minutes**. No disinfectant is guaranteed to be completely effective; however the 3% hydrogen peroxide is usually effective. Toys should also be cleaned and disinfected with the 3% hydrogen peroxide solution for 20 minutes at least twice daily. Cloth toys may be washed and heat-dried in the clothes dryer for 30 minutes.

*** This solution is for child care centers that have staff or children with Crypto. This is not for general disinfection in child care centers without illness.*

Should hydrogen peroxide be used in addition to bleach?

If there is a confirmed case of Crypto in the child care center, instead of a bleach solution, use a 3% (99% kill rate) or, if available, 6% (99.9% kill rate) concentration of hydrogen peroxide for cleaning. If for some reason, child care centers are using both bleach and hydrogen peroxide, the surface to which the hydrogen peroxide was applied should be wiped and be completely dry before using bleach. A proper bleach solution, not hydrogen peroxide, should be used for general disinfection in child care centers without Crypto illness.

When is it safe for child care centers to switch back to normal non-hydrogen peroxide cleaning?

It is likely safe to switch back to normal routine cleaners and disinfectants one incubation period (12 days) after resolution of diarrhea and vomiting in child care cases. However, if there is a community-wide outbreak of Crypto, it might be reasonable to continue to use hydrogen peroxide longer than the 12 days.

Where do we find 6% hydrogen peroxide?

Any janitorial or cleaning supply warehouse that supplies hospitals will usually carry 6% hydrogen peroxide. The 6% concentration may also be labeled "20 volume." A 3% hydrogen peroxide solution may be referred to as a "10 volume" solution.

Is it safe to use child wading pools, water tables, and other water-based activities when there is a case of Crypto?

Child care centers should immediately suspend the use of child wading pools, water tables, and other water-based activities upon learning of a confirmed case of Crypto. All children with diarrhea should be excluded from water-based activities and should remain out of water-based activities for an additional two weeks after diarrhea stops regardless of whether or not they have been treated. In any situation, portable wading pools are strongly discouraged. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Public Health Association state, "small portable wading pools do not permit adequate control of sanitation and safety, and they promote the transmission of infectious diseases".

Are children and/or staff required to have two negative stools before returning to child care centers?

IDPH does not require children or staff confirmed with Crypto to provide two negative stools before returning to child care settings. Both children and staff should remain out of child care settings until diarrhea and vomiting has stopped.